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## OLR Bill Analysis

### sSB 241

#### ***AN ACT CONCERNING YOUTH HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSES, REVISING CERTAIN HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSE FEES AND REQUIRING REGISTRATION BY HUNTING AND FISHING GUIDE SERVICES.***

#### **SUMMARY:**

This bill makes various changes to the state's hunting and fishing statutes. Among other things, it:

1. requires a 16-year-old to obtain a fishing license in order to fish in Connecticut waters, to conform to current licensing practices;
2. exempts from the fishing license requirement secondary school students participating in school fishing events or field trips that teach fishing techniques;
3. changes certain hunting and fishing license fees, including reducing specific fees by 50% for 16- and 17-year-old residents;
4. allows the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) to designate up to two days each calendar year when it can issue free one-day sport fishing licenses;
5. allows DEEP, with the Office of Policy and Management's (OPM) approval, to occasionally offer reduced fees for hunting and fishing licenses and permits;
6. requires instructors to offer hunting, trapping, and archery safety courses on-line or in a classroom and allows them to charge a course fee;
7. requires people providing hunting or fishing guide services to annually register with DEEP and pay a \$100 fee; and

8. allows the DEEP commissioner to adopt regulations to implement the hunting or fishing guide requirements.

EFFECTIVE DATE: January 1, 2015, except for the provisions related to hunting, trapping, and archery safety courses, which are effective October 1, 2014.

## **§ 1 – FISHING LICENSES**

### ***Age Requirement***

The bill lowers the age requirement for obtaining a fishing license from over age 16 to age 16, thus conforming the statute to DEEP's current practice of licensing 16-year-olds.

### ***Exemption for Certain Students***

The bill exempts from the fishing license requirement, with the DEEP commissioner's written authorization, Connecticut secondary school students (i.e., grades nine through 12) participating in school fishing events or field trips that teach fishing techniques. The fishing event or field trip must be part of a school course, and the school must apply for the commissioner's authorization on a form he prescribes.

## **§ 2 – HUNTING AND FISHING LICENSE FEES**

### ***Changed License Fees***

The bill (1) increases one resident combination hunting and fishing license fee, (2) reduces two resident super sport combination license fees, and (3) reduces the group fishing license fee, as Table 1 shows.

**Table 1: Hunting and Fishing License Fees**

<b><i>License</i></b>	<b><i>Current Law</i></b>	<b><i>The Bill</i></b>
Combination (all-waters fishing and firearms hunting)	\$ 38	\$ 40
Firearms super sport (all-waters fishing, firearms hunting, deer on private land with shotgun or rifle, and wild turkey in spring on private land)	80	70
Firearms super sport (all-waters fishing, firearms hunting, migratory bird conservation stamp, and migratory bird	60	50

harvest permit)		
Group fishing license	250	125

***Fees Charged 16- and 17-Year-Olds***

The bill reduces by 50%, rounded to the next highest dollar, the fees charged to 16- and 17-year-old residents for any firearms or archery hunting, trapping, or sport fishing (1) license or (2) permit, tag, or stamp for taking waterfowl, salmon, pheasant, turkey, migratory game birds, deer, or small game.

***Free One-Day Sport Fishing License***

The bill allows the DEEP commissioner to designate up to two days each calendar year when he may issue free one-day sport fishing licenses. He can make free licenses available to all members of (1) the public or (2) an age group he designates. The law already requires him to designate one day each year when no license is required for sport fishing.

***DEEP's Authority to Offer Reduced Fees***

The bill allows the DEEP commissioner, with the OPM secretary's concurrence, to occasionally offer reduced fees for certain hunting and fishing licenses, permits, tags, and stamps in order to increase participation in such activities. These include firearms or archery hunting, trapping, or sport fishing licenses and permits, tags, or stamps for taking waterfowl, salmon, pheasant, turkey, migratory game birds, deer, or small game.

Reduced fees must be allowed only for a portion of a year and be effective during the calendar year in which the reduction is offered. Also, the commissioner may offer reduced fees only if the reduction is offered to (1) all members of the public, (2) all members of a certain age group, or (3) people who successfully complete a fishing education or hunting, trapping, or archery safety course within the calendar year.

**§ 3 – HUNTING, TRAPPING, AND ARCHERY SAFETY COURSES**

The bill requires hunting, trapping, and archery safety courses to be provided on-line or in a classroom. Current law permits the courses to

be provided by any means. The bill also allows anyone authorized to conduct hunting or archery courses to charge a course fee. Current law prohibits such a fee, but allows instructors to charge a fee for trapping courses.

## **§§ 4 & 5 – HUNTING OR FISHING GUIDES**

### ***Registration***

The bill prohibits people from providing hunting or fishing guide services in Connecticut unless they annually (1) register with DEEP on a form the commissioner prescribes and (2) pay a \$100 registration fee. The form must include the registrant's name, residential and business addresses, business telephone number, and services offered. Registrations are nontransferable and expire on the December 31 following their issuance.

Under the bill, a user, operator, or crew member of a registered charter, party, or head boat is exempt from the registration requirement.

The bill defines "hunting or fishing guide services" as aiding, assisting, or instructing anyone, in exchange for payment, in the taking of fish or wildlife while in Connecticut fields or forests or on Connecticut waters.

### ***Limitation***

The bill limits, to two, the number of customers that a hunting or fishing guide can have on a boating vessel when taking or landing marine species.

### ***Penalties***

A violator of the hunting or fishing guide requirements commits an infraction punishable by a fine of up to \$90 and can pay the fine by mail without making a court appearance.

### ***Regulations***

The bill authorizes the DEEP commissioner to adopt regulations to implement the hunting or fishing guide requirements.

## **BACKGROUND**

### ***Related Bill***

sSB 71, which the Environment Committee reported favorably, similarly (1) requires hunting, trapping, and archery safety courses to be provided on-line or in a classroom and (2) allows anyone authorized to conduct hunting or archery courses to charge a course fee, but makes the changes effective upon passage.

## **COMMITTEE ACTION**

Environment Committee

Joint Favorable Substitute

Yea 27      Nay 0      (03/07/2014)